In the Specification:

Please amend the specification as shown:

Please delete the paragraph on page 21, line 25 to page 22, line 5 and replace it with the following paragraph:

The isotype of each monoclonal antibody, C11-15, C11-14, C11-10, C11-7, C11-9, C11-11, C11-21 and C11-3, produced from the above 8 hybridomas, respectively, was found to be IgG_2a for C11-10 and C11-7, and IgG_1 for C11-14, C11-3, C11-9, C11-21, C11-11 and C11-15 using a mouse Ig isotype kit (manufactured by Zymed). The epitope of each of the monoclonal antibody was determined using peptides comprising about 20 amino acids that were synthesized in a manner that 10 amino acids each from the HCV core region-derived sequences are overlapped. C11-14, C11-10, C11-7 and C11-3 recognized a sequence described in Japanese Patent No. 3171827. C11-9 and C11-21 recognized a sequence ^{21}DVKFPGGGQIVGGVYLLPRR^{40} **(SEQ ID NO: 1)** and a sequence ^{100}PRGSRPSWGPTDPRHRSRNVG^{120} **(SEQ ID NO: 2)**, respectively. Thus, C11-9 is a monoclonal antibody that recognizes a sequence of amino acids 21-40 of the HCV core antigen and C11-21 is a monoclonal antibody that recognizes a sequence of amino acids 100-120 of the HCV core antigen.

Please delete the paragraph on page 44, lines 24-36 and replace it with the following paragraph:

Hybridoma obtained by the method described in Example 9 was intraperioneally administered to mice that had been treated with pristane etc. and monoclonal antibody (AOT3) produced in the ascites was harvested. The monoclonal antibody was purified using a Proten A-conjugated Sepharose column. The isotype of AOT3 was found to be IgG_2b using a mouse Ig isotype kit (manufactured by Zymed). The epitope of monoclonal antibody was determined using 20 peptides that were synthesized from HCV core region-derived sequences. AOT3 specifically recognized the sequence ^{101}RGSRPSWGPTDPRHRSRNVG^{120} **(residues 2-21 of SEQ ID NO: 2)**. AOT3 also exhibited a reactivity to this sequence higher than C11-21.